

new waves beating on the old shores still reached Britain with a considerable time-lag here, in 1888, *Robert Elsmere* was discussed by eminent persons as a bold and troubling problem novel, while Ibsen's *Ghosts*, which fluttered the intellectual doves of Europe in 1881, had to wait ten years before it was given a single performance in London, and that in defiance of the Censor But that only added to the fun

The combined assault of the new science and the new art led to a vast stirring of consciences, for conscience was still taken for granted, as a normal constituent of human anatomy Out of this stirring, in the main, arose what was known as the "Social Reform" movement Political democracy was an accepted fact True, the centre of power had not really shifted, control and direction were in the hands of landowning captains of industry, like Richard Potter Prime Ministers still came, inevitably, from the great public schools Trade Union was a word of fear, workmen were only timidly, in ones and twos, penetrating into Parliament, as Liberals Formal democracy however was completed, so far as the males in the nation were concerned Town artisans like Sidney Webb's father were enfranchised in 1867, after smashing the railings of Hyde Park their brethren in the countryside followed in 1885 Women, of course, had to wait for recognition as citizens for another quarter of a century and a world-shattering war Yet there was a formidable agitation going on for their inclusion, and, the door of

higher educa-
tion having been successfully forced, rational
minds, like
those of Richard Potter, saw small sense in a
franchise
which excluded highly intelligent women like
his daughters.
True, his argument was that they would vote
Tory, like
himself, and so help to stem the tide of
illiterate workmen;
true, too, the ablest of those same daughters
publicly
disagreed with him When it could be said
that women
did not want the vote, it was not surprising
that the general